

## REACTION TO THE FRENCH COLONIZATION OF INDOS-CHINA

and the use of blackmail to get it, had given them away to the police. Wholesale arrests followed throughout 1930-31. In Yunnan a number of attempts were made to reconstruct the party, but they failed through lack of leaders. In 1933 the party died as an organized group: the only influence that has survived is indirect.

Louis Roubaud, the journalist sent by the *Petit Parisien* to investigate the situation, talked with the imprisoned leaders of this party. He found that they had concerned themselves almost exclusively with Yenbay, under the delusion that that uprising would have been the fuse to set off the whole country. There was a conspicuous absence of organizing ability. The revolutionary movement showed itself capable of isolated acts of terrorism and manifestations, but it was weak in arousing the masses because its programme and methods were too much the work of the intelligentsia. The pacific mass demonstrations were the only active ties of which the Moscow communists approved, for they capitalized the Oriental force of inertia and proved to European imperialists their dependence upon native labour.

In 1931, when the Communist Party was at its height, six years after its birth in Indo-China, it numbered 1,500 members with 100,000 affiliated peasants. Nguyen-Ai-Quoc was its founder, mentor, and saviour. Recognizing the Annamites<sup>5</sup> love of property and their patriarchal family system, as well as the numerical and intellectual weakness of the proletariat, he planned first to assure Annam's independence under a democratic bourgeois regime and then, by a second step, to integrate it into the Soviet Union.

Nguyen-Ai-Quoc, born in 1892 in a province of Annam where the revolutionary tradition was strong, from his earliest childhood resented

the servility of the mandarin—of which his father  
 was a member—  
 to the French. He left home at the age of seventeen  
 and worked his  
 way around the world on a French ship. In Paris he  
 practised different  
 trades, lived an austere life, bought books with his  
 savings, and affiliated  
 himself with the French communists. Compassion for  
 his oppressed  
 compatriots stirred his imagination, and was the  
 dynamic ideal lodged  
 in a frail body. At the end of the War, he drew up a list  
 of Annamite  
 desiderata and sent it to the Versailles treaty-makers.  
 He founded in  
 Paris the Intercolonial Union of Coloured Peoples. In  
 1920 he attended  
 the Communist Congress at Tours, where he cast his  
 vote in favour of  
 the Third Internationale. He founded a newspaper in  
 1922 in which  
 to denounce the abuses of French imperialism. His  
 work harmonized  
 with the new trend in Bolshevik policy which, after 1923,  
 determined to